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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: MARR, MNJC, PARM, NATO, IT
SUBJECT: CODEL BYRD MEETING WITH ITALIAN
Q DEFENSE MINISTER ZANONE

1. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: ITALIAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE VALERIO ZANONE TOLD CODEL BYRD THAT, WHILE NATO MUST DECIDE ON THE RELOCATION OF THE 401ST TFW TO ITALY, HE THOUGHT PROSPECTS WERE GOOD. HE STRESSED THAT WE SHOULD NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE POLITICAL OPPOSITION THAT WILL BE MOUNTED IN ITALY. ON SNF MODERNIZATION ZANONE SAID HE THOUGHT NATO SHOULD NOT DISCUSS EVERY PROPOSED SYSTEM AT ONCE, BUT TAKE EACH DECISION AS REQUIRED. ZANONE'S CHEF DE CABINET AGREED WITH SENATOR BOREN THAT NATO SHOULD LOOK FIRST AT LONGER-RANGE SNF MODERNIZATION. END SUMMARY.

3. SENATORS BYRD, PELL, WARNER AND BOREN WERE ACCOMPANIED TO THE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 12 BY AMBASSADOR RABB, SENATE STAFFERS D'AMATO, BOTTS AND HARRIS, AND POL/MIL COUNSELOR TEFFT (NOTETAKER). ZANONE WAS JOINED BY HIS CHIEF OF CABINET LTG GIANNATTASIO, HIS VICE CHIEF OF CABINET BG SION, POL/MIL OFFICER COL. GRAZIANI (NOTETAKER), POLITICAL ADVISOR BONALDI, AND DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR LENZI.

4. SENATOR BYRD OPENED THE MEETING BY INTRODUCING HIS COLLEAGUES AND NOTING THAT SENATOR NUNN HAD HAD TO RETURN TO THE U.S. AND REGRETTED NOT BEING ABLE TO COME TO ITALY. HE DESCRIBED THE PURPOSE OF THE DELEGATION'S VISIT TO EUROPE AS ONE OF ELICITING VIEWS OF NATO LEADERS ON FUTURE NATO DEFENSE REQUIREMENTS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT SUPPORT FOR NATO WAS CONSTANT AND UNCHANGING IN THE SENATE; IT IS UNDIMINISHED BY THE INF TREATY.

5. SENATOR BYRD SAID THAT NATO NEEDS TO BE VIGILANT IN VIEW OF THE DYNAMIC NEW SOVIET LEADERSHIP. WE NEED TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES, BUT OUR STRATEGY CANNOT BE

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BASED ON STATEMENTS OF GOOD WILL. WE MUST EDUCATE OUR PUBLICS TO THE FACT THAT, DESPITE CHANGES IN SOVIET PERSONALITIES, THE BASIC SOVIET SYSTEM HAS NOT CHANGED. NATO MUST BE UNITED IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES WE FACE. THE U.S. IS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR THE STEADFASTNESS AND BOLDNESS THAT ITALY HAS SHOWN IN PROVIDING LEADERSHIP IN NATO. SENATOR BYRD MENTIONED ITALY'S DECISION TO DEPLOY INF SYSTEMS, ITS ACHIEVEMENT OF A THREE PERCENT GROWTH IN REAL DEFENSE SPENDING, AND MOST RECENTLY ITALY'S DECISION TO STEP FORWARD WITH REGARD TO RELOCATING THE 401ST TFW NOW IN SPAIN. THE SENATOR SAID HE EXPECTED THE SENATE TO RATIFY THE INF TREATY. NOW WE WERE LOOKING AT START AGREEMENT. HE ASKED ZANONE WHAT HE THOUGHT OF A FIFTY PERCENT REDUCTION OF STRATEGIC WEAPONS, ASSUMING WE CAN SOLVE OUTSTANDING VERIFICATION QUESTIONS.

6. ZANONE RECALLED THAT ITALY HAD STRONGLY SUPPORTED THE INF TREATY. THE DIFFICULTY IS FOLLOWING UP ON THE TREATY. THE CURRENT SITUATION COMBINES A DIMINISHED PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE SOVIET THREAT WITH THE NEED FOR NATO TO MODERNIZE ITS WEAPONS. ZANONE SAID THAT HE WAS CONVINCED OF THE NEED TO MAINTAIN THE CLOSEST CONTACT BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE U.S. IN VIEW OF FUTURE ARMS NEGOTIATIONS.

7. THE REDEPLOYMENT OF THE F-16'S IN SPAIN, ACCORDING TO ZANONE, MUST BE CONSIDERED IN THIS FRAMEWORK. THE OFFICIAL ITALIAN GOVERNMENT POLICY IS THAT THE 401ST SHOULD REMAIN IN EUROPE AND THAT THE SOUTHERN REGION SHOULD NOT BE WEAKENED. NATO SHOULD DO NOTHING TO DIMINISH THE POSSIBILITIES OF NEGOTIATING CONVENTIONAL ARMS REDUCTIONS WITH THE SOVIETS. WITHDRAWAL OF THE 401ST WOULD BE AN ACT OF UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT, WHICH IS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE OF THE TACK WE SHOULD BE TAKING.

8. ZANONE SAID THAT WE MUST STILL DECIDE WHERE TO PUT THE 401ST. THE ITALIAN GOVERNMENT MUST SERIOUSLY CONSIDER REDEPLOYMENT IN ITALY WITHOUT FORGETTING THE SERIOUS POLITICAL OPPOSITION THAT SOWOVE WILL ENGENDER. LEFT-WING ELEMENTS IN THE PARLIAMENT WILL FIGHT A RELOCATION TO ITALY. THE MAJORITY PARTIES ARE IN FAVOR BUT NOT ALL IN
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EXACTLY THE SAME WAY. AT THIS POINT, ZANONE SAID, WE CANNOT GO MUCH FURTHER, SINCE THE GOVERNMENT HAS RESIGNED. NEVERTHELESS, HE THOUGHT IT WAS REALISTIC TO SAY THAT THE PROSPECT OF RELOCATION TO ITALY WAS POSITIVE.

9. THE ROAD TO FOLLOW IS IN A NATO FORUM. IT IS CRUCIAL THAT POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL COSTS BE CONSIDERED IN NATO. THIS QUESTION INVOLVES THE ENTIRE ALLIANCE. IF A DECISION IS TAKEN RELATIVELY QUICKLY BY NATO, ITALY CAN CONCLUDE A STUDY -- WHICH IS IN FACT ALREADY UNDERWAY -- ON POSSIBLE BASES. SUCH A RELOCATION WOULD BE AN EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE LINKAGE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE. AS HE HAD TOLD AMBASSADOR RABB, HE THOUGHT THE ITALIAN POSITION CAN BE POSITIVE ON THE 401ST, BUT IT IS NOT AN EASY POLITICAL DECISION TO MANAGE.

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O. THE ITALIAN PUBLIC, ZANONE SAID, LOOKS WITH GREAT HOPE AT THE POSSIBILITIES OF DISARMAMENT. FOR TWENTY YEARS WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE TWO LINES IN THE HARMEL REPORT: KEEPING UP NATO'S STRENGTH, WHILE LOOKING AT EVERY POSSIBILITY OF DISARMAMENT. THEREFORE ITALY LOOKS FAVORABLY ON THE POSSIBILITY OF FIFTY PERCENT REDUCTIONS. ITALY ALSO FAVORED A BAN ON CHEMICAL WEAPONS. ANDREOTTI AND GENSCHER HAD RECENTLY MADE STATEMENTS ON THIS ISSUE AT THE CD. ITALY WANTS TO FIND A WAY TO REDUCE CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS, BEFORE "ANY MORE IS DONE" ON TACTICAL NUCLEAR SYSTEMS. ANY REDUCTION OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS WILL ELIMINATE NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE. HE RECOGNIZED DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW ON THIS QUESTION IN EUROPE.

11. SENATOR BOREN PAID TRIBUTE TO ITALIAN LEADERSHIP IN NATO, SAYING THAT WE DO NOT FEEL THAT WE HAVE A BETTER OR CLOSER ALLY. HE ALSO PRAISED ZANONE'S PERSONAL LEADERSHIP AS A STRONG SUPPORTER OF NATO AND THE CLOSE COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR INTELLIGENCE SERVICES. HE SAID WE ALL WORRIED ABOUT WHERE GERMANY IS HEADED. HE ASKED ZANONE HOW WE SHOULD MOVE FORWARD ON THE MODERNIZATION QUESTION, AVOIDING A THIRD ZERO. THE SENATOR SAID HIS VIEW WAS THAT PUBLIC PRESSURE ON THE FRG ON MODERNIZATION WAS COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE AND THAT WE SHOULD LOOK SERIOUSLY AT MODERNIZING SYSTEMS CLOSER TO THE 500-KILOMETER RANGE.

12. ZANONE AGREED WITH SENATOR BOREN ON THE EXCELLENT WORK BEING DONE BY THE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES, NOTING THAT HE HAD JUST READ THE NIGHT BEFORE AN EXCELLENT PIECE ON SHIITE FUNDAMENTALISM FROM HIS SERVICE. HE NOTED THAT IN THE PAST YEAR ITALY HAD FORTUNATELY NOT BEEN ON THE FRONT LINE AGAINST TERRORISM, THAT PLACE HAVING BEEN TAKEN BY SPAIN, THE FRG, AND IRELAND. ITALY STILL HAD TO CONTROL INTERNAL TERRORISM; THIS TASK WAS NOT YET FINISHED.

13. ZANONE SAID HE DIDN'T FEEL PARTICULARLY QUALIFIED TO SUGGEST HOW TO HANDLE THE FRG ON MODERNIZATION. ZANONE SAID LINKING INF AND NUCLEAR MODERNIZATION WAS NOT APPROPRIATE, SINCE IT COULD THEN LOOK LIKE CIRCUMVENTION. ZANONE THOUGHT THAT MODERNIZATION WILL TAKE SOME TIME, SO IT WAS BETTER NOT TO DISCUSS EVERYTHING ALL AT ONCE, BUT ONLY WHEN EACH ISSUE REQUIRED DECISION.

14. ZANONE SAID THAT WE WERE NOW SEEING A SPECIAL PHASE OF A DYNAMIC FRENCH POLICY IN THE SECURITY FIELD. WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT CREATING SECTORS OF DIFFERENTIATED SECURITY IN EUROPE. HE ALSO SAID THAT NATO SHOULD BE GIVING SPECIAL ATTENTION TO THE SOUTHERN REGION. THE IDEA OF A SOUTHERN "FLANK" OF NATO MUST BE DISCARDED.

15. SENATOR WARNER JOINED HIS COLLEAGUES IN PRAISING ZANONE AND ITALIAN SECURITY POLICIES. HE SALUTED ZANONE AND HIS COLLEAGUES FOR TAKING A POSITIVE APPROACH TOWARD THE POSSIBLE RELOCATION OF THE F-16'S IN ITALY. SENATOR BOREN SAID THAT THE DELEGATION HAD BEEN REASSURED DURING ITS VISIT TO BONN TO FIND THAT THE GERMAN LEADERSHIP WILL STAND FIRM AGAINST
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THE THIRD ZERO. CHANCELLOR KOHL AND DEFENSE MINISTER WOERNER, AND FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER TO A DEGREE, HAD ADDRESSED THE ISSUE. FRANKLY, WHAT THE DELEGATION HAD HEARD ABOUT THE FRG BEFORE SETTING OUT FROM THE U.S. WAS NOT CORRECT.

16. SENATOR BOREN RECALLED THE ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS WITH CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT TO CARRY OUT THE NECESSARY RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ON STRENGTHENING NATO'S TACTICAL NUCLEAR OPTION. THIS IS VITAL IF FLEXIBLE RESPONSE IS TO REMAIN EFFECTIVE. HE ASKED ZANONE TO PRIORITIZE NATO'S MODERNIZATION NEEDS, NOTING THAT HE BELIEVED THE LONGER-RANGE SNF SYSTEMS SHOULD HAVE PRIORITY.

17. AT ZANONE'S REQUEST HIS CHIEF OF CABINET LTG GIANNATTASIO RESPONDED THAT ITALY FULLY AGREED THAT LONGER-RANGE SNF SYSTEMS MUST BE MODERNIZED FIRST. THEY WILL ENABLE NATO TO HIT FURTHER BEHIND SOVIET LINES AND HINDER SECOND ECHELON REINFORCEMENTS. SENATOR BOREN NOTED THAT THE LONGER-RANGE WEAPONS WOULD BE MORE ACCEPTABLE TO THE FRG AS WELL.

18. AS THE MEETING CONCLUDED ZANONE SAID THAT THE NEW ITALIAN MOD STRATEGIC STUDIES INSTITUTE HAD UNDER WAY A COMPREHENSIVE STUDY ON LONG-TERM ITALIAN SECURITY POLICY. THE REPORT IS DESIGNED TO PROVIDE GUIDANCE ON MEANS OF STRENGTHENING THE EUROPEAN PILLAR IN NATO AND IDENTIFYING ITALIAN DEFENSE PRIORITIES DURING THE NEXT TEN YEARS. ZANONE CONCLUDED SAYING THAT NATO'S CURRENT TASK IS TO COMBINE THE GREAT HOPES OF DETENTE WITH THE NEEDS OF MODERNIZATION. THE LATTER WILL HAVE TO BE PRESENTED IN A MANNER ACCEPTABLE TO PUBLIC OPINION. RABB

END OF MESSAGE

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